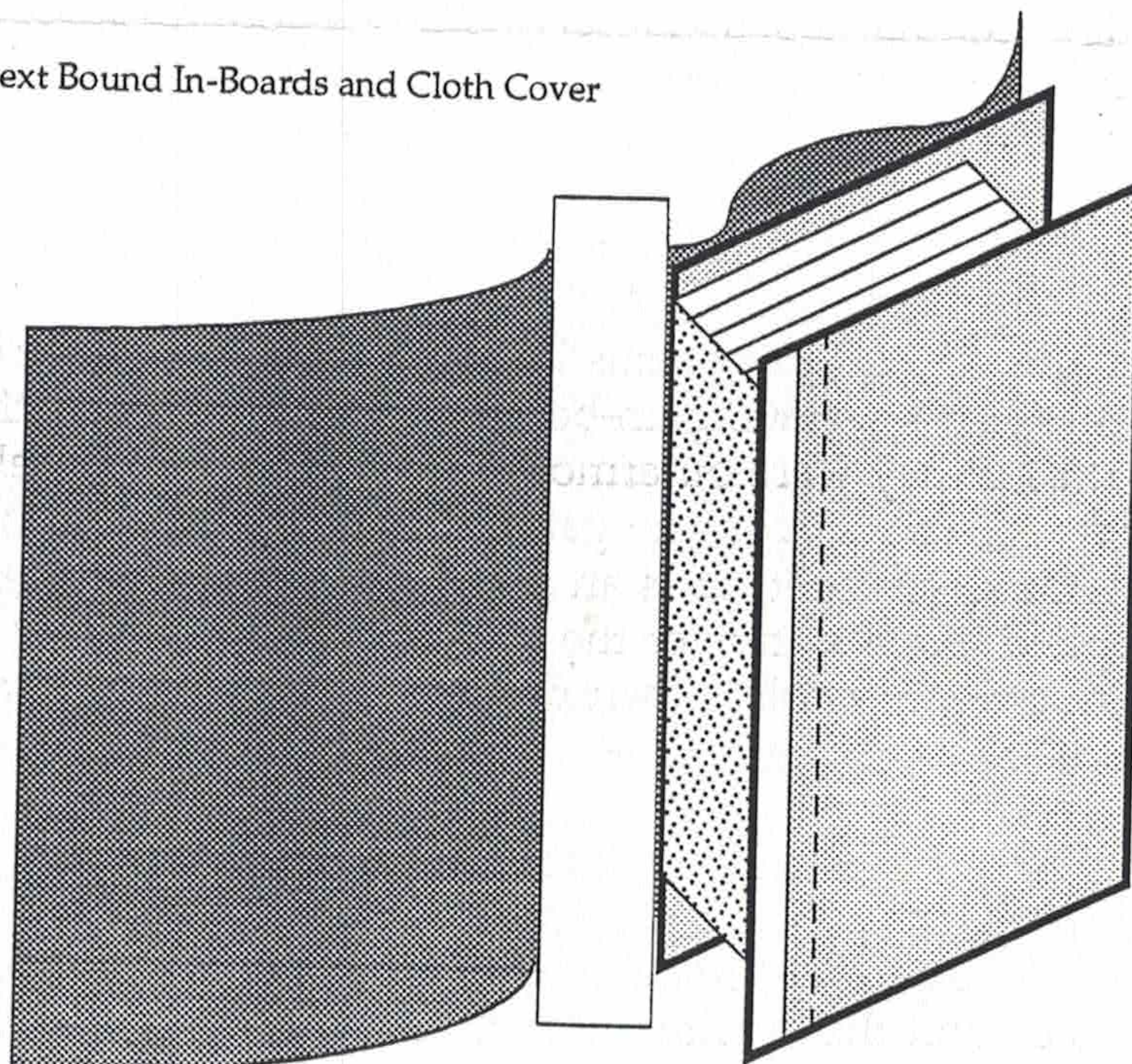


BookNote # 24

Transfer Tape Binding

Utopia, Texas
1996

Text Bound In-Boards and Cloth Cover



Transfer Tape Binding

Introduction

The transfer tape binding provides a flat-backed, double fanned text with card stock boards and cloth covering bonded together with self-adhesive tape. This is an unusual binding, but not necessarily because of the use of transfer tape. It is neither a "hardback" or a "paperback". Instead its structure is related to the earliest codex binding which emerged almost two thousand years ago. This earliest, in-boards binding structure is no longer used. It is unlike the structures of modern mechanized binding or Western craft binding or book conservation. The only remnant of its use is with cultures that preserve a traditional Eastern Christian form of their catechisms and gospels.

The three fundamental features of this historical binding type are its unsupported, thread only, sewing, in-boards construction with the boards sewn to the text as if they were outermost gatherings and squareless, or same size, covers and text. The boards and gatherings of almost all of the early codex bindings are sewn together as an anatomy before any covering. Covering is applied like a skin over the anatomy and frequently this is leather. The skin covered book is then provided with a wallet, satchel, chemise or traveling container.

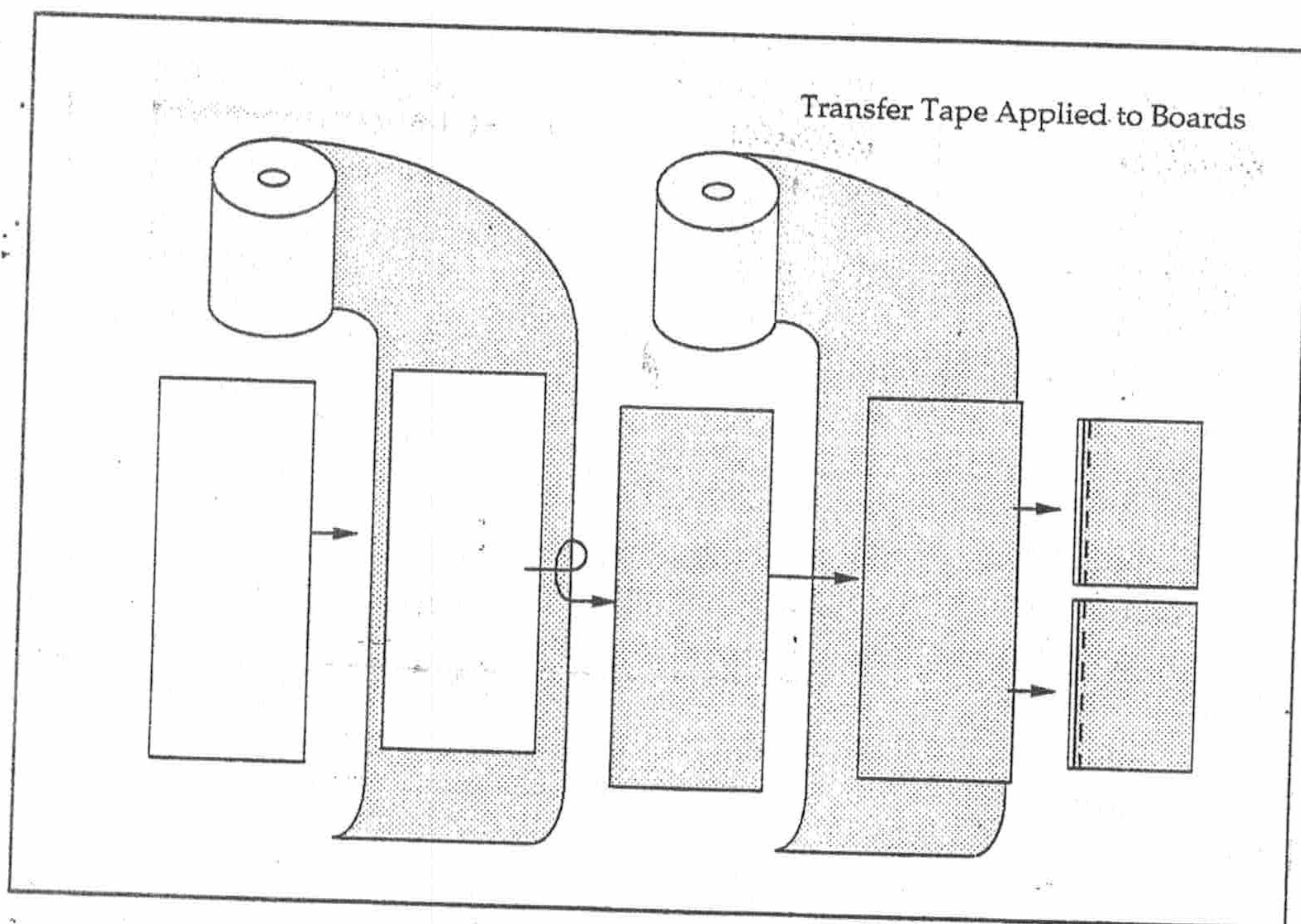
The uniqueness of the early codex binding structure is illustrated in its action. The boards are attached to the text at the position of the folds of the outer gatherings, that is to say, at the folds of the end papers. The board is not set back from the folds and the opening motion is transmitted directly to the back of the book. The earliest codices were small and light, many with leaves and boards of papyrus and these were sewn with thread creating firmly stitched chains across the back of the book. Released at the foreedge, such a small codex springs slightly into a even fan of boards and leaves. In reading the book spreads open fully as the individual stitches relax.

The transfer tape binding follows this model. The boards are the same size as the text and extend fully to the back of the book. The transfer tape binding does supplant sewing with adhesive binding, but this change is not as drastic as it seems since both fan binding and unsupported sewn book produce a pliant, docile opening action. Sewing can be used instead of adhesive binding as in the modern "sewn boards" version of the early codex. Both bindings lay flat, face up or down, as the boards lever the text opened.

Making a Transfer Tape Binding

The transfer tape binding is easy to make. Single fold end papers are needed in an eighty to one hundred pound text weight. Proceed to forward the text as usual for double-fan, flat-back work. The binding edge of copier/laser paper should be roughed before fanning using a coarse sanding stick. Fan on double outer blank sheets and the folded end papers, set the seal of the adhesive and apply and rub down a non-stretch cambric that extends onto the pastedowns.

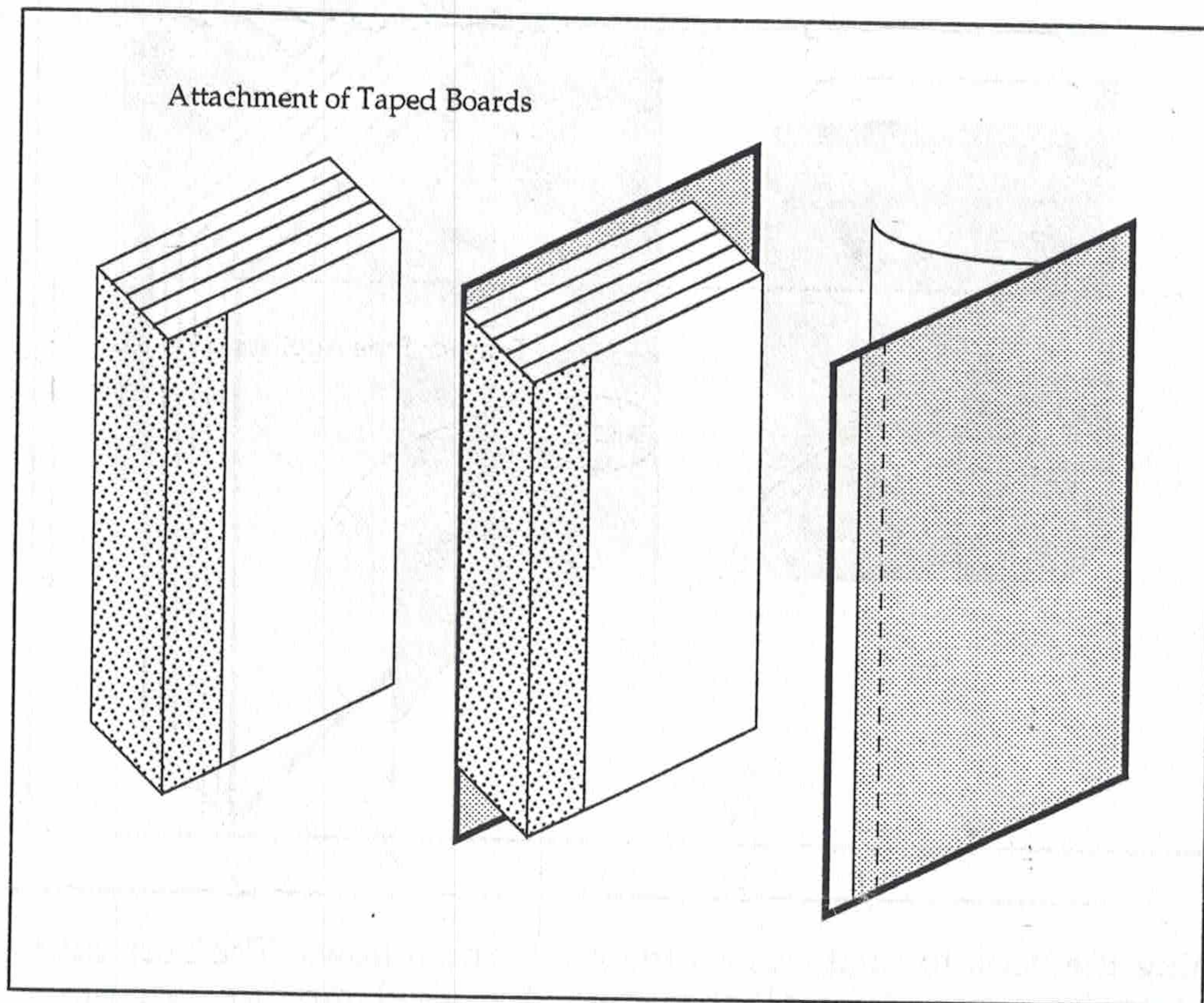
While the text sets prepare the tape covered boards. A suggested transfer tape is 3M 465 or 924 in a an eight inch width. These tapes release an unsupported film of adhesive from a paper carrier. Their bond is stable and the adhesive is an inert acrylic. The boards can be .20 or .40 tan card stock. Select an eight inch wide, long grain piece of card to yield two boards. Working on a clean table, roll out sufficient tape and lay down the card. The tack is immediate and the card must be laid down carefully. Trim out the card using a cutting knife, releasing it from the tape roll.



Now apply tape to the other side of the card. In this application the tape will be set back from the gutter edge. In the application the set-back need not be accurately placed. The exact set back can be trimmed later. Roll out and apply the tape exposing about one centimeter of untaped gutter edge. Now trim out the rough cut board stock. First trim out the exposed gutter margin to .5 cm, then make a score cut through the release paper .5 cm from the tape edge or

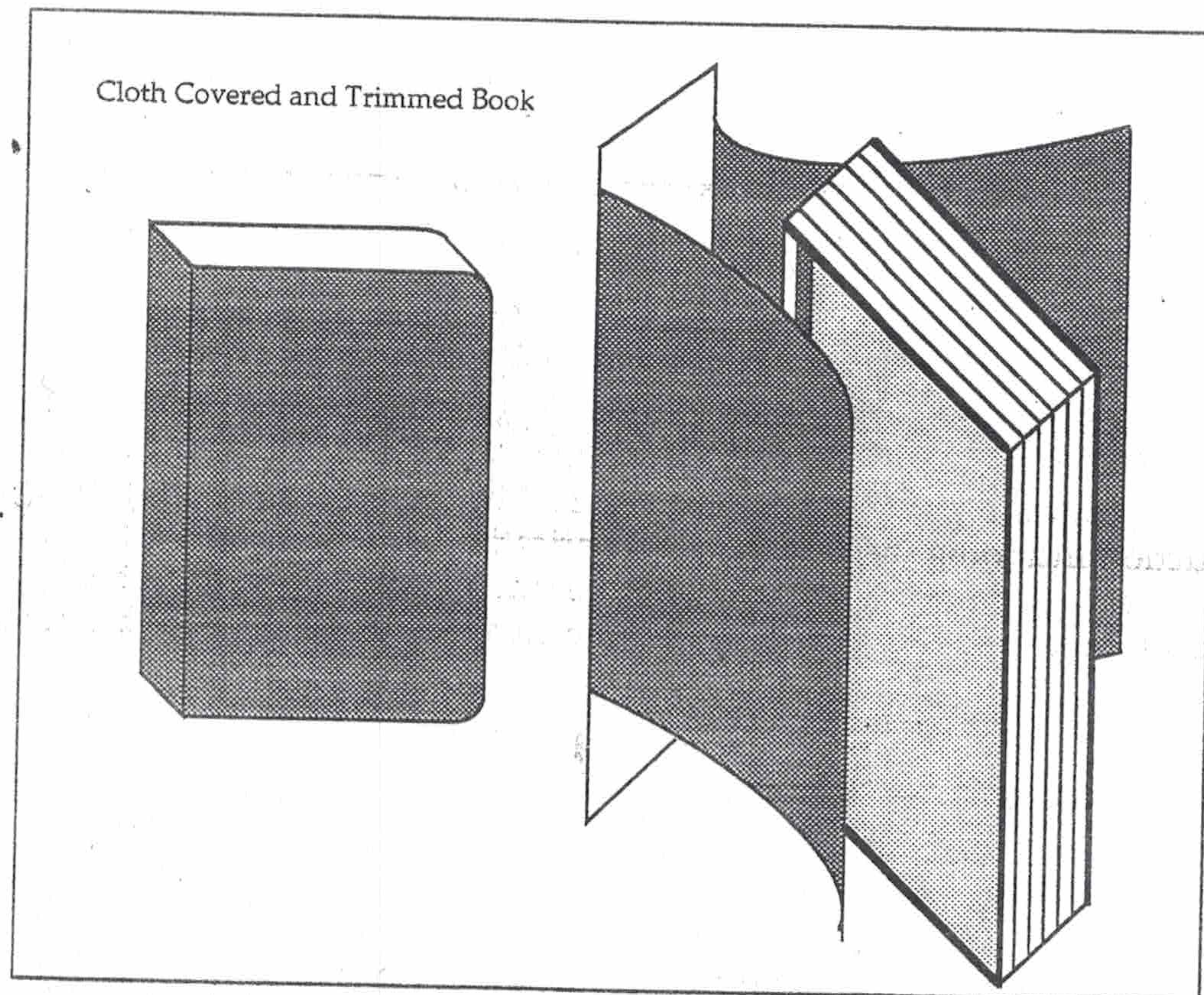
one centimeter from the board edge. Produce the boards making the head and tail cuts to yield clean stock in a nine inch height and seven inch width. This is a production size to accommodate books in the nine by seven range. Larger production board sizes are possible with multiple tape applications. [see illustration]

Now bond the boards to the text. It is perfectly accurate to pitch the board on by eye, removing the release layer opposite the set-back side, and aligning the gutter edge of the board exactly to the back of the text. Also roughly align the board to the right (head or tail) edge of the text. Lay the board down carefully and seal it to the book with hand pressure. Flip the book and bond on the other board. [see illustration]



Produce a tape backed spine inlay of .10 or .20 card which is one millimeter less than the thickness of the text with it boards. The inlay should be in excess of the text height, or long enough to be beyond final text trim size. Remove the release backing and bond the inlay into an appropriate sized cut sheet of book cloth or other selected covering material. Fold back the covering stock along the edges of the inlay. [see illustration]

Now pull off the release layers on the text from the gutter edge to the set back score. This will expose a narrow strip of adhesive on either side. This is a hanging-in strip that can be tacked and released if adjustment is needed. The text is gripped at the foreedge in one hand and the cloth held supported in the other. Locate the cloth with the mounted inlay meeting the back of the text. Pinch the cloth on either side of the inlay and the cloth will tack to the exposed strips of adhesive. Satisfied with the fit, peel out the remaining release sheets, then stretch and rub down the cloth sides. [see illustration]



Trimming the book to final size on the guillotine follows. The best cut is with the back to the right or left wall of the bed. A flush clamp face, without a book end bevel is best. Wipe the blade following cuts through the acrylic adhesive. Video corners on the foreedge, cut with a corner rounder, complete the binding.

Uses for the Transfer Tape Binding

The transfer tape binding is intended for ultra short run edition work with smooth, hard copier text paper as with on-demand book printing done on a production copier. Labeling with laser printed paper labels is appropriate. This binding can also be considered for library use in production of bound

photocopies to replace embrittled and deteriorated books. Sheet book cloth can be stamped in the conventional manner for application to transfer tape binding.

Advantages of the Transfer Tape Binding.

The in-boards construction of the transfer tape binding eliminates case making and casing-in. Also eliminated is costly equipment such as presses and casing boards. No drying time is needed and the text printing is not effected by humidity. The waterless process of the transfer tape binding eliminates much bindery maintenance and clean-up associated with liquid adhesive. This can be estimated as a five to ten percent time saving on the operations involved. Aside from purchase, preparation and clean-up of brushes and adhesive applicators there is time lost in testing of applicators and handling of waste materials. Also saved is product spoilage, spot cleaning and special inspection routines associated with liquid adhesives. Finally training time and skill level required for production work is less with transfer tape technique.

The finished binding is attractive and will not sag on the shelf. The binding lies flat beside a key board or face down on a copier. It is lighter and more compact than case binding of the same size. The design is adaptable to high production including mechanized pre-fabrication of the taped boards and taped inlays. Edition printing can even be run two copies tall with the bindings cut out at the guillotine. This unusual approach can half binding time!

An in-boards production line is so different from current operations that it is best to think of this work outside of bindery conventions. The transfer tape binding assembly involves packaging skills and accurate, quick handling of prefabricated components. This work could be done in a clean area of the receiving and shipping department. At the same time, transfer tape binding is rewarding and meaningful. It recreates a structure that disappeared over a thousand years before the advent of printing. This archetype of the first codex book which was invented by North African cultures and craft workers, can now be returned to use in a different, digital era.

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